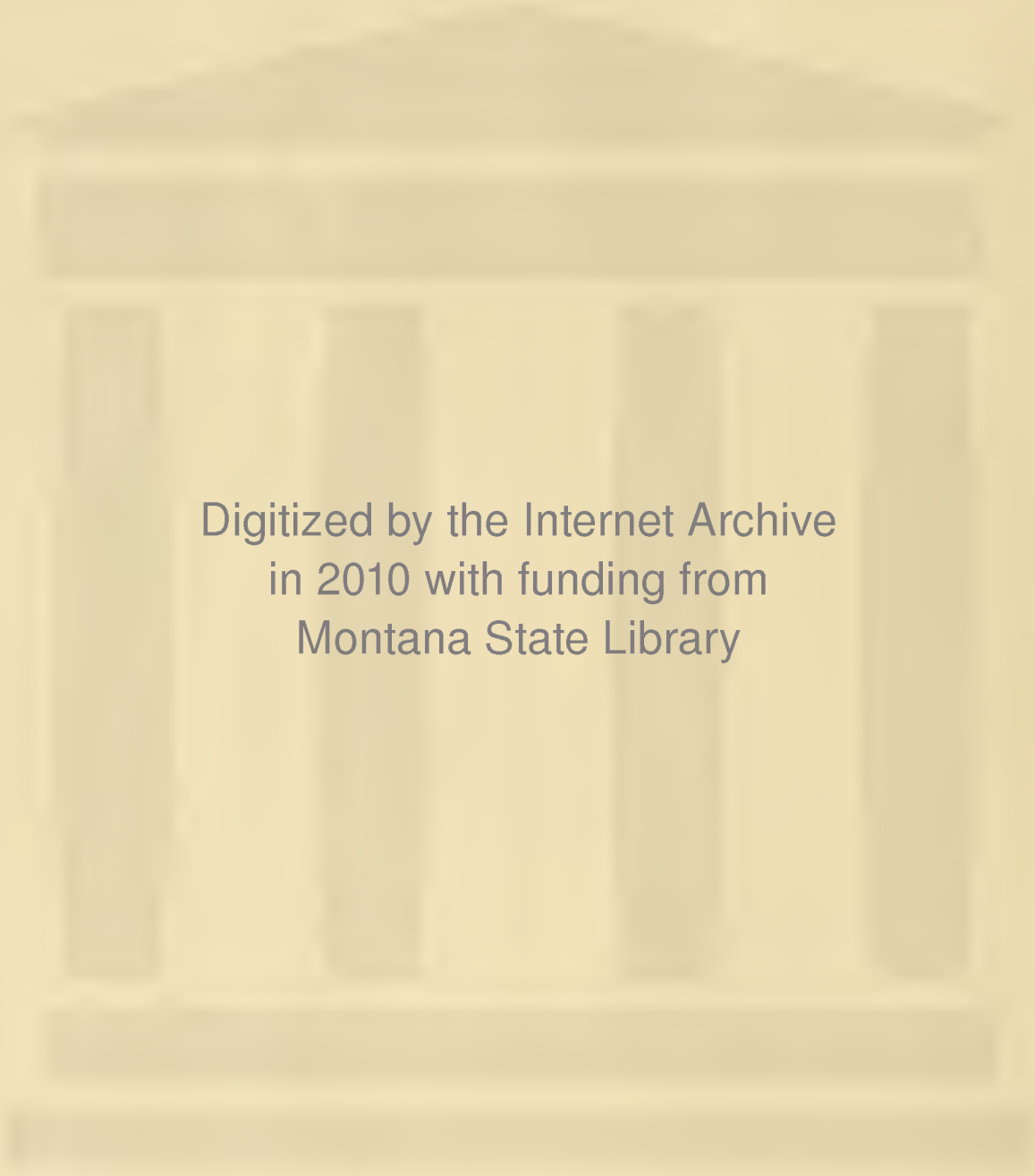

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MONTANA

WILDLIFE BULLETIN

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Native Upland Game Birds

Female Franklin's Grouse or Fool Hen.

Upland Game Birds native to Montana are the Sharp-Tailed or Pintailed Grouse, often erroneously called Prairie Chicken, Sage Grouse or Sage Hen, Blue Grouse, Ruffed Grouse, Franklin Grouse, commonly called Fool Hen, and Ptarmigan.

They are characterized by feathered legs, except in the case of the Ruffed Grouse, and the toes are naked except in the Ptarmigan. Grouse subsist upon seeds, buds, berries, insects and the leaves of plants found in their environment. They generally depend upon the colors of their plummage for concealment and when they do take to flight, it is with a whir of wings, which is decidedly startling. Except for the Ptarmigan they are polygamous and during the mating season the cocks put on peculiar performances of strutting and dancing.

The range of the Sharp-Tailed Grouse, our most abundant native upland game bird, is confined mostly to the Central and Eastern portions of the State. However, there are a few areas in Western Montana where this game bird is found. It prefers open grass land with patches of brush and areas adjacent to grain fields.

The Sage Hen is the largest of our native grouse and is generally confined to the Southeastern and Central parts of the State. There are a few scattered ranges of importance in Southwestern Montana east of the Continental Divide. This heavy, slow-flying bird frequents high and dry alkali prairie regions and is seldom found far from sagebrush. Their plummage varies from black to gray and yellowish white, which completely blends with their environment.

The Blue Grouse habitat is confined mostly to the mountainous areas in Western and Southwestern Montana. This dusky grouse is an inhabitant of coniferous forests and haunts thickets of fir, pine and cedar and is most often found along timbered mountain ridges. The Blue Grouse is our second largest native game bird.

(Continued on Page 6)

Blue Grouse on her nest.

Along the Yellowstone With Rod and Reel

Native Cutthroat Trout.

Montana Grayling.

The Yellowstone River heads in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and flows down through Yellowstone Park into Montana, following a northeasterly course until it crosses the boundary into North Dakota, at which place it joins the Missouri a few miles after crossing the Montana-Dakota State line.

The Yellowstone, as viewed from a fisherman's eye, is a mighty stream and one of which you cannot become too intimate with or ever conquer. At the present time this River is declared open the year around by legislative action throughout Montana and fishing for all species in open waters and through a hole in the ice is permitted throughout the entire year. However, the waters within Yellowstone Park are governed by the regular Park fishing seasons.

Within its waters can be found practically all of the game species of fish that exist in Montana, with the exception of two, namely, the Landlocked Salmon and the Dolly Varden trout which are found on the Western slope only. In the headwaters can be found the Native Cutthroat, Grayling, Whitefish, Rainbow, Eastern Brook, Lock Leven and Mackinaw. Most of the headwater streams, especially those originating in Yellowstone Park and the Beartooth Mountains, afford splendid Native Trout fishing.

Mountain Lakes

There are many lakes lying high in the Beartooth Plateau region. While some of these have been stocked with Natives and Rainbow, the large majority contain Eastern Brook as it has been found that this species prove more adaptable to those lakes lying at high altitudes than either the Rainbow or the Natives. Machinaw Trout have been stocked in the deep waters of Heart Lake. The majority of these lakes are accessible only by trail and some by no trail at all and are reached only by those hardy individuals possessing the ambition and curiosity to explore the out-of-the-way places. However, anyone contemplating a trip into the Beartooth Region even in the middle of the summer should take along plenty of warm clothing. Most of these lakes are situated at altitudes ranging from 8,000 to 10,000 feet and many have had the experience of having to break a half inch of ice out of a water bucket on an early August morning.

Along the Upper Yellowstone

As the Main Yellowstone flows down through its narrow canyon walls and into the broader valleys below, the Native trout give precedence to the Rainbow and Loch Leven. These species will be found to inhabit the River all the way from Gardiner to Laurel. In other words, all the waters within the counties of Park, Sweetgrass and Stillwater may be considered prize fishing waters for these species if the angler will but choose the right season and the correct river levels. Whitefishing comprises no small part of the fishing in this particular area.

Major Tributaries

No description of the Yellowstone would be complete without some mention of a few of the major tributaries to be found within this area, such as Hellroaring, Buffalo Creek, Slough Creek, Shields River, Boulder River, Sweetgrass Creek, Stillwater, Rock Creek, the East and West Rosebud and the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone. All of these streams and many others afford excellent fishing for Loch Leven, Rainbow, Natives and Eastern Brook trout.

There are located on these tributaries, not including those lakes lying within the Beartooth Plateau region, over 47 lakes varying in area from 200 to 700 acres and containing Eastern Brook, Rainbow, Cutthroat and Grayling.

The Lower Yellowstone

As the Yellowstone flows toward the Dakota line, it gradually changes in many of its characteristics and by the time it has reached Yellowstone county it is biologically a much different stream than when it left Yellowstone Park. The reason for this is the combination of several factors—the chief among these being the existing higher temperatures during the summer months and the increasing amounts of silt which the river has picked up from the many irrigation diversions and overflows and for this reason it is not considered a suitable habitat for any of the trout species. However, this does not mean that fishing must be confined only to the upper stretches. In fact, it is to the contrary for this part of the River is inhabited by many of the warm water species and among those which are caught very successfully are the Pike, Pickerel, Fresh Water Drum and Ling. There has been a decided increase noted in the migrations of warm water species the last four or five years and this increase in migration has no doubt been brought about by the completion and operation of the huge Fort Peck Reservoir located on the Missouri River above its confluence with the Yellowstone. Due to the exceedingly low temperature of the water emerging from Fort Peck Lake and the insurmountable barrier to migration, many of these species have instinctively turned to the Yellowstone for their spawning runs.

Fish Planting

The responsibility of keeping the Yellowstone River amply stocked with trout is delegated to the Emigrant and Big Timber Hatcheries.

The Emigrant Hatchery assumes the burden of stocking some of the headwater streams within the Park and the Main Yellowstone with all of its tributaries as far down as the Shields River below Livingston.

The Big Timber Hatchery assumes the responsibility of stocking the remainder of the Yellowstone from the Shields River junction to the confluence of the Clark's Fork. This is indeed a large territory as it embraces all of the Beartooth Plateau region in addition to many lakes and tributaries in the Crazy Mountain area.

The stocking of the Lower Yellowstone with warm water species is delegated to the Miles City Pond Culture Station at Miles City, Montana. From this station are planted Bass, Crappies, Bream, Bullheads and Catfish. The introduction of these species is in no small part responsible for the splendid fishing to be found in the lower waters.

Of the game fish found in these waters, the Native Cutthroat and Grayling in addition to the Whitefish are the only three species native to Montana. The other trout species such as the Eastern Brook, Loch Leven, Rainbow and Mackinaw have been introduced. It is also worthy of mention that our Montana Grayling is the only fish of this species in existence in the United States today. Many years ago this species was also found in Michigan but due to heavy logging operations and other disturbing factors, the Grayling in that state completely disappeared and today those Grayling which are found in some of the Eastern States and several of the Western States have all been reared from eggs produced from Montana Grayling.

It would be folly to attempt to recommend the best type of tackle for the various waters of the Yellowstone as the fishing conditions vary from one extreme such as just plain 'nigger fishing' for some of the warm water species to the supreme accomplishment of whisking a dry fly out over some of the crystal lakes and streams near its headwaters. As one Yellowstone fisherman put it, "It isn't so much the type of tackle you use, but how you use it and when."

Rainbow Trout.

Eastern Brook Trout.

Reservoir Development . . .

Sportsmen realize that the success or failure of game bird development depends chiefly upon the presence of food, water and cover. If one or more of these requirements is lacking, game resources in the area will suffer.

In the development of reservoirs, chiefly for the betterment of waterfowl conditions, these three factors were kept in mind. Ducks might light for a short resting period upon reservoirs devoid of food and cover. These same reservoirs planted to the proper species of vegetation would present not only feeding and resting places but also provide nesting sites for many species of waterfowl.

During the last three years the Fish and Game Commission has carried on a restoration project entailing the development of 24 reservoirs. Through a cooperation agreement, these reservoirs have been leased to the Department by the Montana Water Board and Soil Conservation Service for the purpose of Wildlife Habitat Development.

A typical development of this kind consist of fencing an area at the upper end of the reservoir. Within this enclosure food and cover-type shrubs are planted. These consist of Caragana, Russian Olive, Buffalo Berry, Wild Plum, Chokecherry and others. Out on the reservoir itself, aqatics are planted .The more important consisting of bullrushes, duck potatoes, sego pond weed, millet and wild rice.

One important benefit which is not as obvious as the development of food and cover, is the actual lengthening of the life of these reservoirs. This is accomplished by silt settling effect of the introduced vegetation at the upper end or intake of the reservoir.

The work has been carried on principally in the eastern half of the State. It is here that the greatest need for this type of development has been found.

Pheasant Liberation . . .

Liberation of Chinese Pheasants will be made from the Fort Peck Game Farm during the month of August.

Several thousand pheasants from the Farm have been moved to the holding pens at the Billings Game Farm where they will be held until ready for liberation in the Southern Montana counties.

Sportsmen will be called upon by Deputy Game Wardens to help liberate the pheasants in their districts.

Melstone Reservoir in Musselshell County.

Live-Trapping and Transplanting of Beaver

Few wild creatures are more interesting than the beaver. Their ability to construct sturdy dams under a variety of conditions places them high among the "engineers" of the wilds. The chief function of these dams is, of course, the creation of ponds where the beaver may live relatively safe from predation. Often an elaborate system of canals is dug, leading out from the pond proper toward the various sources of food. Limbs and small trees may then be floated quite easily along these canals to the food cache in front of the lodge.

These habits which are so interesting to observe have proven to be both beneficial and harmful to man. When beaver living in agricultural districts flood a pasture or hay meadow with their ponds, the results are distinctly harmful. On the other hand, dams and the resultant ponds well back along mountain streams, creates conditions which benefit fish life. Spring run-off is also controlled. Water which would otherwise rush down out of the mountains in the early spring is checked by the series of beaver dams, to be released more evenly throughout the summer season. The water level in the vicinity of the ponds is raised so that a more luxuriant growth of both willows and grasses is developed. These meadows present important additional forage for game animals and livestock.

Several cases have been observed where streams had so dcreased in flow that trout were no longer able to survive in them. A year following the introduction of beaver, these same streams had been restocked and are now producing desirable catches of fish.

The problem is then chiefly one of distribution. Beaver in some areas are a nuisance while in many others their presence is highly desirable. For this reason, the possibility as well as the practicability of live-trapping and transplanting beaver has been viewed with keen interest.

Several Deputy Game Wardens have done some very important pioneering work along this line. With the advent of Restoration funds in 1941, it became possible to carry on the live-trapping program upon a larger scale. During the following three seasons approximately four hundred beaver were trapped and moved to desirable new locations.

Large woven wire, basket-shaped traps are used. These open in much the same fashion as a suitcase. One half of the trap is submerged under eight to ten inches of water; the other half is firmly anchored down on the shore or stream bank. The beaver swims over the submerged half, lured by a beaver castor scent. Here he comes in contact with a trigger. As the trap closes the beaver is scooped up out of the water and sits high and dry awaiting the arrival of the trapper. The animals are gathered in a holding pen where they are fed on their favorite food, consisting of aspen and willow bark. When the proper number has been obtained, they are transported by truck or pack horse to their new home.

The work is seasonal. The majority of the beaver are moved between July 10th and September 10th. At this time the kits are sufficiently large to move and plenty of time remains for the building of the necessary dams and lodges as well as the gathering of a food cache for the coming winter.

Here then is an example of man's use of one of natures own tools in the never-ending job of restoration.

Beaver caught in live-trap

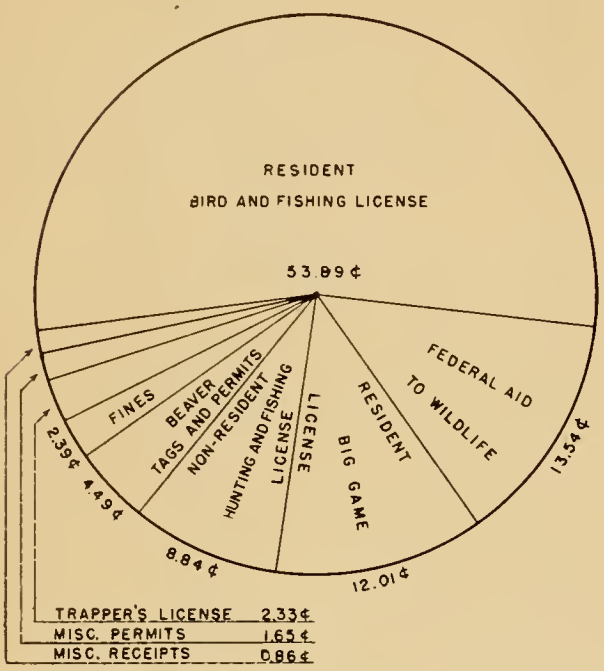
A Beaver liberated near the edge of a mountain stream.

A LICENSE YEAR REPORT

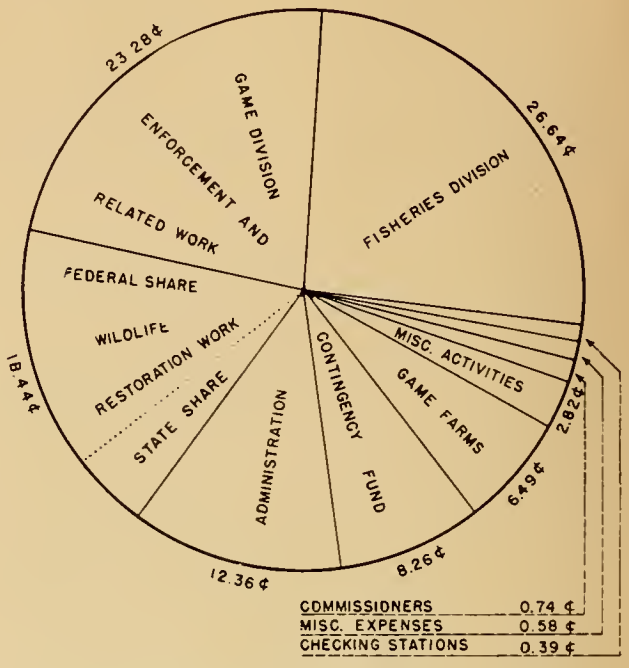
STATE OF MONTANA FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

FROM

MAY 1, 1943 TO APRIL 30, 1944



WHERE THE INCOME DOLLAR CAME FROM



HOW THE INCOME DOLLAR WAS USED

NATIVE UPLAND GAME BIRDS

(Continued from Page 1)

The Ruffed Grouse range is siimlar to that of the Blue Grouse. However, it is found at much lower elevations, and haunts heavily wooded creek bottoms and along small mountain streams. The drumming of the Ruffed Grouse is one of the common sounds of the deep woods and has a ventriloquial effect so one cannot accurately determine the distance or direction of the sound. The Ruffed Grouse is a wily bird and if an intruder stumbles upon a mother bird during the nesting season, she will attempt to entice the enemy away by fluttering and dragging a wing helplessly, like a wounded bird.

The Franklin Grouse is found mostly in the Northern and Western portions of Montana. It inhabits heavily timbered wilderness areas. The popular name, Fool Hen," is applied to this grouse because of its friendly curiosity when man approaches. The male of this species is rather strikingly marked with patches of red over the eyes.

The Ptarmigan is the least known and rarely seen of our game birds. It has a limited range confined to high mountains along the Continental Divide from Canada to Sun River and in other scattered high mountains in Western Montana. Its plummage varies from patches of grayish brown, black and white in summer, which blends in with its surroundings, to a pure white in winter, camouflaging it effectively against a snowy background.

The Canadian Lynx is one of the handsomest of the cat family. It may be distinguished from the Bobcat by its unringed tail, tufted ears and larger size.

The two large chisel-like teeth on the upper and lower jaw of the Beaver are self-sharpening because the inner softer surface wears away faster than the harder outer surface.

White-tail Ptarmigan — Winter plumage.

WITH THE WARDENS . . .

Harry Morgan was appointed a Deputy Game Warden April 1, 1913. He began work under Jake DeHart, who was then the State Game Warden. The District assigned him was the northern part of Powell county and the Clearwater and Swan River drainage in Missoula county, with headquarters at Ovando, Montana—his present headquarters.

HARRY N. MORGAN

In telling of his early life in Montana, Mr. Morgan relates:

"I was born January 6, 1863 at Fort Benton in the old Doby Fort, the son of Captain John Morgan. When my mother died in the spring of 1871, Dr. J. S. Glick of Helena came to Fort Benton and took me back to Helena with him. He was a great friend of my father.

"At that time, Fort Benton was the end of navigation on the Missouri River. Stages and freighters took passengers and supplies on to Helena from there. I. G. Baker, T. C. Powers and, I believe, Hugh Kirkendall, were then freighting from Fort Benton to Helena. When we left Fort Benton on the stage for Helena, we ran across a large herd of buffalo about 26 miles from Fort Benton. The stage driver estimated there were several hundred thousand buffalo and we had to wait two or three hours for them to pass. The buffalo were migrating north to their summer range and would not have stopped for anything.

"In the fall of 1873, Henry Schniple, a stockman from Philipsburg, made his annual trip to Helena for supplies. I went to Philipsburg with him to work on his ranch and remained there until 1876. Then I left and attended school in Philipsburg for one year.

"In 1879 I worked for William Wallace, a stockman and rancher. I broke horses and helped round-up cattle to take to the Judith Basin. On the trip it was necessary to night-herd the cattle to keep them from straying. We trailed them through Townsend, up Sixteen Mile Creek, over the Divide and down to the American Fork of the Musselshell River to Martinsdale. From Martinsdale we travelled down the River, cut across to Judith Gap, then to the forks of the Judith River, following close to the Arrow Creek Trail to Fort Benton. The Brooks cattle outfit was the only one ahead of us.

"Boles and Major Reed had a trading post close to where Lewistown is now located and there I helped build a cabin for winter.

"That fall a big prairie fire started at Judith Gap and burned over most of the Basin, destroying a lot of cattle. The fire was so bright that antelope could be seen running at night in an attempt to escape the fire.

"Later in the fall, that same year, Pike Landusky came to Fort Benton with a six-horse team and a trail wagon. He asked me if I would like to live with him at his trading post on Flatwillow. He said he would give me $15 a month and since that was all I was getting from Wallace and doing a man's work, I accepted as I would have only about 30 head of horses to look after so the Indians would not steal them. Pike Landusky did a lot of trading with the Crow and Flathead Indians when they came over from the Bitterroot in the fall to hunt buffalo. In trading with the Indians, a tin cup of sugar or 7 cartridges was traded for one antelope hide; one-half sack of flour for one buffalo hide. The Indians also traded Pemmican, which was made from dried buffalo meat, tallow, bone marrow and buffalo berries pounded and mixed together. Pemmican was then placed in sacks made out of buffalo hides; the sacks were sewed up and the Pemmican would keep for years. It was prepared for eating by placing in a skillet with water and made into a hash. Tons of Pemmican were shipped on boats to St. Louis.

"Pike Landusky's trading post was 25 miles East of the Snowy Mountains. I went hunting with him up on Warm Spring Creek, over the Divide, down Chamberlain Creek (sometimes called McDonald Creek) on up to Pike Creek. However, we did not stay there long as a bunch of Sioux Indians rose up out of the sage brush and I sure traveled. They hung around two or three days and left for the Musselshell and Yellowstone country to steal horses from the Crow Indians. The Sioux were traveling afoot but did not get our horses.

"Another time a party of Indians attempted to steal our horses. We had quite a scrap and I was shot in the jaw, but not seriously wounded, with an old cap and ball pistol.

"It was necessary to corral the horses every night. The corral was built by digging a trench two and one-half feet deep, setting the posts up together and tramping the earth solidly so that the Indians would not be able to pull the posts up.

"In the spring of '81, I worked during the cattle round-up for Two Dot Wilson at Martinsdale and then I went to Philipsburg and worked on ranches for awhile. My next job was driving a team for a contractor by the name of Jack W. Hall. I then went to work on my own hook, hauling wood and railroad ties for the railroad to Philipsburg and also cut cord wood and props for the mines.

"In August, 1885, I married Ophie U. Rider from Valipraso, Nebraska and we raised three girls and three boys.

"At the time of the crash of silver, I went to Butte and worked in the Pennsylvania mine. Later I went back to Philipsburg and worked on different ranches, and did

(Continued on Next Page)

NOV 4 '47 9: PM

WITH THE WARDENS

(Continued from Page 7)

quite a bit of hunting and trapping, as well as helped a surveyor by the name of George Wilson survey mining claims. Wilson was killed in an automobile accident near Alhambra Hot Springs several years ago.

"In 1905 I guided and packed for Mr. Curt Dubois of Washington, D. C., who was mapping the Hell Gate Forest, now the Lolo Forest.

"In November, 1905, the officers were after Frank Brady, a notorious horse thief who took his stolen stock to Dakota. He was hiding out in Lower Rock Creek and we located him in Welcome Gulch. I was appointed to go with a marshal. I suggested that we both go inside the cabin and grab Brady but the marshal figured we would both be killed.

"We stayed there all night. At the barking of his dog, Brady came out of the cabin with a gun in his arms. When the dog started barking, I ran behind a tree and the marshal behind a rock. Brady pulled up to shoot but I was ready and let him have it. Brady's shot fell 20 feet short of us. Brady tried to shoot again but I beat him to it and he died on the door steps. I looked around for the officer but he was gone. I hollared and he answered a quarter of a mile away.

"In 1906 I was appointed Forest Guard; in 1907 I was appointed Assistant Forest Ranger and resigned in 1913. On April 1, 1913 I was appointed a Deputy Game Warden, the job I still hold.

"I am a member of the Society of Montana Pioneers and we old timers are passing away fast and not many of us are left."

ANTELOPE SEASON . . .

The Fish and Game Commission has authorized the taking of a limited number of antelope in the following counties: Carter, Powder River, Hill, Valley, Blaine and Phillips.

From September 24 to October 8, 1944, 400 buck antelope may be taken in Carter county and 100 buck antelope in Powder River county by permit holders.

That portion of Hill, Valley, Phillips and Blaine counties lying north of Highway No. 2 will be open to antelope hunting by permit holders from October 29 to November 26, 1944, inclusive. Twenty-five antelope of either sex may be taken in Blaine, Valley and Phillips counties and seventy-five antelope of either sex may be taken in Hill county by permit holders.

Since a successful antelope hunt in the above four counties may be dependent upon a migration of antelope from Canada, only local residents in these counties are advised to place application for a permit.

All applicants for an antelope permit must be the holder of a current Big Game License and must make application to the State Fish and Game Warden at Helena, Montana, not later than August 15, 1944. The applicant should state in his application the number of his Big Game License and the county in which he wishes to hunt, with one county named as a second choice, and enclose a $1.00 Money Order for the permit.

If there are more applications for antelope permits than there are permits to be issued for each county, a drawing will be held at the Fish and Game Office in Helena on August 21 to determine to whom the permits are to be issued. All unsuccessful applicants will have their $1.00 deposit refunded and all successful applicants will have their permits mailed to them.

FEB 18 '50 12: AM

During the 1943 open season on antelope, a total of 659 antelope were killed by 750 permit holders.

MAY 20 '50 10: PM

Sage Hen Season . . .

An open season on Sage Hens was declared in Carter, Powder River, Blaine and Hill counties on August 13, 1944 only, with a bag limit of three birds.

In these four counties, Sage Hens are reported as plentiful and on an increase. It seems to be the concensus of opinion, from recommendations submitted by sportsmen, that in the remaining counties throughout the State having a Sage Hen population, there be no open season this year due to unfavorable hatching conditions in most areas.

FORMER EMPLOYEES NOW IN THE ARMED FORCES

J. P. Campbell	Bob Brink
A. A. O'Claire	Robert Casebeer
C. N. Lindsay	Wm. E. Schultz
R. H. Lambeth	Julius K. Stinson
Lester Newman	Burke Thompson
Jack Thompson	Forest Keller
Waldo Vangsness	Ed Furnish
C. E. Willey	Bill Thompson
Don Brown	Ken Thompson
Donald Wright	Gene Sherman
Ben Wahle	Raleigh Shields
Leo LaTray	Ross Snyder
Emmett Colley	Vern Campbell
	Harold Fletcher

MONTANA WILDLIFE BULLETIN

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